Gas Agencies Commissioned in Assam

1628. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of places where new gas agencies have been commissioned so far in 1995-96 and where they are proposed to be commissioned during the remaining part of the year in Assam, district-wise;

(b) what are the norms for opening new gas agencies in small towns and big villages having population of ten thousand and more and to what extent surrounding areas are covered by the agencies to ensure maximum benefit to the rural people and to save forests; and

(c) the names of places proposed to be covered during 1996-97, district-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) Details of LPG distributorships already commissioned and to be commissioned during the current year i.e. 1995-96 in Assam are as under:—

Commissioned			To be commissioned		
Sibsagar	—	3	Dhubri	—	1
Dibrugarh	—	1	Cachar	—	2
Jorhat	—	3	Nagaon	—	1
Kamrup	—	2	Barpeta	—	1
Nagaon	—	1			
Barpeta	—	1			

(b) and (c) LPG distributorships are opened in towns having a population of 20,000 and above as per 1991 census, in a phased manner, subject to product availability and economic viability of the location. Accordingly 16 LPG distributorships have been included in the LPG Marketing Plan 1995-96 for Assam. Potential of the adjoining villages is also taken into consideration for planning a distributorship at any location.

Disinvestment in ONGC Stocks

1629 DR. BAPUKALDATE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to disinvest Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Stocks;

(b) the target and percentage of stock equity to be disposed of;

(c) whether foreign financial institutions will be allowed to buy the shares; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) and (b) The Government have short-listed ONGC as one of the PSUs to be taken up for disinvestment to the extent of 5% of its paid up capital during 1995-96. In the October, 1995 tranche of disinvestment 2.5% was offered for sale.

(c) and (d) As per notice Inviting Bids, the Foreign Institutional Investors approved by Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) are also eligible to bid for the shares subject to their fulfilling any conditions of purchase and ownership laid down by SEBI.

रोहला में राष्ट्रीय उद्यान पार्क से प्रभावित हुए व्यक्तियों को मुआवजा दिया जाना

1630. **श्री महेश्वर सिंह:** क्या पर्यावरण और वन मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि सरकार ने हिमाचल प्रदेश के रोहला नामक स्थान में प्रस्तावित राष्ट्रीय उद्यान पार्क के विस्थापितों की विभिन्न समस्याओं के समाधान हेतु हाल ही में नई दिल्ली में एक बैठक बुलायी थी;

(ख) क्या यह भी सच है कि इस संबंध में निर्ण लिये गये थे; और

(ग) इन निर्णयों के आधार पर क्या कार्रवाई की गयी है और कितने स्थानीय लोगों को रोजगार प्रदान किया गया है?

पर्यावरण और वन मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री राजेश पायलट): (क) और (ख) जी, हां।

(ग) हिमाचल प्रदेश सरकार के मुख्य वन्य जीव वार्डन ने रिपोर्ट दी है कि निर्णयों पर निम्न लिखित कार्रवाई की गई है:—

1. शक्ति और मारोद गांवों को अन्यत्र न बसाने के बारे में आवश्यक निर्देश दिये गए हैं।
2. पार्क में रोजगार के लिए स्थानीय लोगों को प्राथमिकता दी जा रही है और भविष्य में भी उनको प्राथमिकता दी जाएगी।
3. विश्व बैंक की सहायता प्राप्त परियोजना के तहत राज्य परियोजना कार्यान्वयन समिति ने वन सुरक्षा के लिए ठेके पर स्थानीय शिक्षित बेरोजगार युवकों को लगाने का समर्थन किया है। तदनुसार प्रस्ताव राज्य सरकार को भेजा गया है।
4. शक्ति और मझान गांवों के मन्दिरों की मरम्मत का कार्य शुरू कर दिया गया है।

Decline in Rhinos Population

1631. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a growing decline in the Rhinos population;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps taken to protect the Rhinos from untimely death; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) The Rhino population in 1989 was 1591 while the latest estimate of 1995 shows a population of 1566, indicating a slight decline.

(b) The main reason for decline of Rhino population during the period was a higher incidence of poaching in the year 1992 and 1993 which has since been contained largely during the last two years.

(c) and (d) The steps taken by the Government for protection and conservatin of Rhinos are given below:

(i) Rhino is placed in Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 thus getting the highest level of protection against hunting and commercial exploitation.

(ii) India is a party to the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and abides by the regualtions of International trade in endangered species of animals and articles. Under the provisions of the convention, rhino is under Appendix-I of CITES which bans international trade in the species, products and derivatives.

(iii) Cooperation of Police, BSF, DRI, Customs, Army and other enforcement agencies is also taken, as and when required, in apprehending the poachers and illegal traders.

(iv) With a view to providing alternative home for Rhinos and also rehabilitating them in their erstwhile habitat programme for 'Rehabilitation of Rhinos' has been started in Dudhwa National Park and Katerniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary of Uttar Pradesh.

(v) A network of 5 wildlife sanctuaries and 4 national parks has been set up for conservation of the species and its habitat. Financial assistance is provided by the Central Government for development of these national parks and sanctuaries, on request from the State Governments.

(vi) There is a scheme for payment of rewards to the informers, which among other things, helps in getting intelligence regarding smuggling of wildlife products.